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TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,

OF ABBOTSFORD,

THE FOLLOWING VOLUME IS, BY PERMISSION,

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BY ONE WHO HAS FROM CHILDHOOD LOOKED UP TO HIM

WITH AFFECTION, ADMIRATION, AND RESPECT.

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INTRODUCTION TO IOLANDE.

THE castle of Vianden, the scene to which the following tale relates, is one of the oldest possessions of the house of Nassau, whose property it became by marriage during the thirteenth century: and it now belongs to the present, or at this day, we should perhaps say, the late king of the Netherlands.

It was on visiting the very romantic and striking ruins of that old feudal fortress during a short stay that I made some time since at the house of a nobleman in that highly picturesque country, that the idea of making it the subject of a poem first suggested itself.

And that idea was more deeply impressed on reading a passage in Bertholet's account of the duchy of Luxem-

bourg: so that although all the fidelity of history is not to be expected, and the tale may rather be regarded in the light of fiction than of truth, yet it is not entirely without foundation, for the account given by Bertholet is, as far as I can recollect, that about the eleventh century, Hermandine, the Baroness of Vianden, and the mother of Iolande (the heroine of the story), wished to persuade her daughter to enter into marriage with a nobleman to whom she was much averse, and used menaces and much violence to force Iolande into the hated alliance. All persuasion and threat, however, proved of no avail, and the story is, I believe, concluded by Iolande taking the veil, and ultimately becoming abbess of the convent of Marienthal, whose ruins still occupy a most romantic situation, and command an extensive view on the banks of the Moselle.

The idea of a secret lover who returned her affections with equal warmth, though highly probable, is not, as far as I know, corroborated by history; and his joining the

crusade is merely a poetic licence introduced as in consonance with the spirit of those times. I have likewise judged it better to diverge from the course of history in bringing the heroine to the altar as a bride and not as a novice, and thus conclude the tale more happily by the death of the rival, the return of the favoured lover, and his union with the fair Iolande.

The occurrence of a *Metternich* as the rival of the hero may require a word of explanation to the English reader. The great family of that name belonged originally to the district in which the scene is laid: and indeed the present celebrated minister of the Emperor of Austria still possesses wide estates in the duchy of Luxembourg, especially Burtschied, with its noble castle seated on a lofty rock overhanging a mountain stream, whose waters join those of the Ours not far below the castle of Vianden.

IOLANDE.

A TALE OF THE DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG.

IOLANDE.

I.

PROUD Vianden's towers are tall and steep,
And Ours' wild stream is broad and deep,
Where, far the castle-wall below,
Its eddying waters leap and flow

In full fair current by. 5

The lordly towers arise on high,
As though their battlements defy
The beleaguerer's force and the battle shock,
And the rudest blast of the tempest mock,
As in feudal pride they look sternly down, 10
On the serfs' abodes in the vassal town,

That far beneath it lie;

Thus crown'd by a tyrant eagle's nest,
Amid some forest a rock's high crest
O'erhangs the wooded vale, 15
Whence the sovereign bird in his airy pride
May soar as he lists o'er the forest wide,
And lord it o'er the dale.

II.

But within this haughty eagle's nest
Dwells a gentle and lonely dove, 20
Who bears as soft and as pure a breast
As ever was warm'd by love.
Her sire, a baron proud in hall
And fear'd in arms, held Vienthal
In pomp of feudal pride. 25
Few cared to meet the angry word,
And fewer still th' uplifted sword
Of Baldwin, Vianden's princely lord.
And he has sought for his Iölande
Some wealthy knight's or noble's hand, 30

Whose lineage high, whose wide domain,
And strength in war had right to gain
His daughter for a bride.

III.

Though many there were would gladly join
The noble alliance of Vianden's line, 35
To few would Baldwin grant the claim
Of kindred with his lofty name ;
And Albert of Metternich's suit alone
That haughty chieftain's favour won.
The maiden loved with changeless truth— 40
But when did true love's course run smooth?
A knight whose form, and glance of flame,
His warlike bearing well became :
In secret they loved, for her haughty sire
Complied not with the maid's desire. 45
For Vianden's lord was stern and cold,
And used in will to be uncontroll'd ;
He deem'd all else were little worth
Save a lofty name and noble birth,

A princely wealth, a wide domain, 50
In war a countless vassal train.
But wealth young Conrad did not own :
A heart for honour's cause alone,
And courage of unsullied fame,
To love bestowed a stronger claim. 55
Still Conrad of Brandenburg sought in vain
The favour of Vianden's lord to gain ;
And Iölande vainly soothed the ire
And hatred of her angry sire.
He loved him not, for a kinsman's blood 60
Had unavenged his sword imbued ;
His death alone could now assuage
The haughty Baldwin's quenchless rage.
And he has sworn, upon his blade,
That blood by blood should be repaid. 65

IV.

But Iölande was a mountain child,
In spirit undisguised and wild,

And if within the daughter's mould
 Were likeness of her sire,
It was that temper uncontroll'd, 70
 That spirit free—that soul of fire :—
Her love was pure as Heaven's beam,
But headlong as the mountain stream.

And Iölande's age was the day-spring of youth,
When love is devotion, and promise is truth ; 75
And the lover's young hope, like the bright ray from
 Heaven,
Is the sweetest of gifts that to mortal is given ;—
And hers was the love which the young only know,
With the vow to be faithful in weal or in woe.

V.

And oft would she steal at the sunset's hour, 80
When her sire was absent from Vianden's tower,
And list for the sound of her Conrad's feet,
In the tremulous joy with which lovers meet.

Within the Vale of Vianden lay
 A fair green space, and wildly gay, 85
 Where Nature had her charms combined,
 Where grove, and stream, and valley join'd,
 Where glen, and rock, and mountain high
 Were blent in strangest harmony.
 The meetest spot when flow'ry May 90
 With blossom deck'd the hawthorn spray;
 When Spring her brighter tint renew'd,
 And Earth her greener mantle strew'd;
 Where 'neath the moonbeam's silver light,
 The elfin king and queen, 95
 And many a laughing mountain sprite,
 Within the forest sheen
 Might oft their midnight revels hold,
 And trace the ring, as wont of old.

VI.

Here oft, when Evening spread her veil, 100
 Fair Iölande and Conrad met;

While nought was heard along the dale

Save the river's ceaseless fret,

While winding amid rock and bush,

The current onward sped, 105

And, foaming, broke with noisy gush

Along its channell'd bed.

An oak the rugged cliff o'erhung,

And wild-flowers to each crevice clung,

The prickly gorse, the yellow broom 110

Now freshly bursting into bloom,

Did o'er the streamlet wildly wave,

And charms to savage grandeur gave.

Here oft in play would Conrad strain

For Iölande each flower to gain, 115

And sigh the tale that maiden's ear

Delights from lover's lips to hear :—

Thus days flow'd on of love and joy

As though young life had no alloy.

But where is he whose life is spun 120

In Time's untroubled course to run?

Though woman's heart may thus be blest,
Man's warmer spirit brooks not rest ;
Her office is with lightsome play
To chase each graver care away ; 125
But man must hold a wider course,
Nor yield to woman's gentle force,
And time and chance will often bring
Slight causes whence results may spring
Of deeper charge. 'Twas thus with him : 130
He fill'd Love's goblet to the brim—
The cup was broken ere he quaff'd
Its deep intoxicating draught.

VII.

Fanatic zeal had lit the flame,
From Palestine the hermit came 135
And preach'd the wild crusade ;
The word flew like a fiery torch,
'Twas heard in palace, tower, and church,

'Twas echoed from the heath and fell,
And cities at its quickening spell 140
The holy call obey'd,
And prince and baron marshall'd forth
Their steel-clad warriors from the North.
Godfrey de Bouillon led the host
That sought the tomb the Christians lost : 145
That lord his banner broad display'd,
And call'd his vassals to his aid ;
And Brandenburgh was a charter'd fief
That own'd De Bouillon for its chief,
And by his tenure Conrad bears 150
Attendance on his Lord ;
And at his back an hundred spears
Must follow at his word.

VIII.

But days roll'd on and Iölande thought
But little on the change they wrought ; 155

For whilst her hours were pass'd with his,
Few other thoughts, but those of bliss,
Did all her mind employ ;
For souls that feel the grateful link
Of love, have little space to think 160
On ought but themes of joy.

IX.

Nor wonder how the tidings broke
On Iölande's ear when Conrad spoke :—
“ Already has De Bouillon cross'd
“ The current of the Rhine, 165
“ And I in haste must join the host,
“ For distant Palestine.
“ Then, dearest Iölande, adieu,
“ The pleasures we have linger'd o'er
“ May now, alas ! return no more : 170
“ Farewell !—Let not that tear-drop start
“ To dim thine eye—to-night I part
“ From life's best joys and you.”

X.

- “ To-night we part!—oh! say not so,
“ Stay but awhile—that word recall— 175
“ For thee I will abandon all,
“ My father, and my father’s home,
“ With thee throughout the world to roam.
“ Stay, dearest Conrad, do not go.
“ To-night! it may not, cannot be; 180
“ Stay but a while—my life, my love,
“ Oh! leave me not,—and I will rove
“ O’er sea and land with love and thee :
“ Then I shall be for ever thine,
“ On Syria’s sands or Palestine. 185
“ Or if thou must, yet go not now,
“ Nor leave me to my angry sire :
“ Methinks I see his darken’d brow,
“ And dread to meet his kindled ire ;
“ Since I must disobey his word, 190
“ Or wed me to a hateful lord.”

XI.

As th' Indian bears his agony,
The torture which his foes apply,
And not a sob, a groan, or sigh,
And not a flutter o'er his cheek, 195
The anguish of his soul bespeak ;
So not a single sigh confess'd
The agony of Conrad's breast,
No tear-drop to his eyelid sprung,
While every nerve and fibre wrung 200
That she should be another's bride—
He paused and turn'd his head aside ;
His hand across his brow he pass'd,
His pulse beat high, and heart throbb'd fast,
He clasp'd and press'd her form to his ; 205
And told his sorrows with a kiss :—
“ But, hark ! is yon the evening breeze,
“ That shakes the boughs, and stirs the trees ;
“ Or is 't the river gushing on,
“ O'er channell'd rock and hollow stone ? 210

- “ No ; ’tis the sound of coursers’ feet,
“ That o’er the greensward loudly beat.
“ Count Albert and my sire return !
“ Oh ! save thee, Conrad, for my sake,
“ Lest that my father vengeance take 215
 “ Upon thy guiltless head.
“ Forbear—for he is fierce and stern ;
“ Nay, sheath thy sword, defence were vain,
“ For there be many in his train
 “ Would gladly see thee dead ; 220
“ Oh ! God protect thee from their sight :
“ Then haste, there ’s refuge still in flight,
 “ Beneath yon aged yew ;
“ Resist not, Conrad, shun their path,
“ Nor bring on me a father’s wrath— 225
 “ Go, screen thee from their view.”

XII.

That brief command was scarce convey’d,
And Conrad scarce her voice obey’d,

When winding 'neath yon tuft of oak,
Her father on her presence broke ; 230
He rein'd his steed, and thus he spoke—
“ Say wherefore, Iölande, at this hour
“ Dost sit within this lonely bower,
“ Thus gazing on the rippling stream,
“ Or on the sun's last level beam : 235
“ Come, say what joys thy time beguiled—
“ Nay, hast been weeping, foolish child ;
“ Canst not forget thy simple fawn,
“ Count Albert's gazehound on the lawn
“ Beneath the castle slew ? 240
“ Then cease that useless, fond regret,
“ For he shall find another yet
“ More playful and more true.
“ A brow more clear, a heart more light,
“ Must cheer our festal board to-night ; 245
“ A gladder voice, devoid of care,
“ Must wake thy harp with joyous air ;
“ Myself and Albert forward ride,
“ Thou followest soon.”—He turn'd aside,

Impatient that when Albert past 250

Her brow should be with grief o'ercast.

Count Albert silent sate the while,

And gazed with dull unmeaning smile,

With vacant eyes, and lips apart ;

Then laid his hand upon his heart, 255

Which beat within a breast of stone,

And strove with ill affected ease

T' assume the voice and mincing tone

That might he thought a lady please :

He something said, " Of such an eye 260

" As gilds the day of victory,

" Or greets the knight of chivalry :"

Then bending o'er the saddle bow,

He doff'd his bonnet from his brow,

And spurr'd his courser on. 265

The rising tears restrain'd at first,

With all a woman's weakness burst,

When thus she was alone.

XIII.

Her spirit could no more restrain
Those drops that now fell fast as rain 270
From thunder cloud, whilst Iölande sank
All speechless on the grassy bank.
As waters which have long been pent
And thwarted in their course,
Again let loose, in free descent 275
Rush on with double force ;
E'en so it was that Iölande's grief
Sought in a flood of tears relief.
Severe and painful was the greeting,
And oh ! it was a bitter meeting, 280
Ere Iölande and Conrad parted.
Though many words they would have spoken,
Yet long that silence is unbroken,
Save by the sobs that intercept
Her faltering accents as she wept ; 285
And well nigh broken-hearted,

O'erwhelming feelings robb'd from each
The powers of utterance and speech ;
But yet one glance or pressure may
Far more than words or voice convey. 290

And in that brief and tender space,
And in that fond and last embrace,
 Whilst in his arms she lay,
Her head reclining on his breast,
Amid her tears her eye express'd 295

 All—all she had to say.

“ Grant, Iölande, one parting kiss ;

 “ And, dearest, I must leave thee now ;

“ I dare not pass an hour like this,

 “ Or I should stay and break my vow.”— 300

XIV.

Another kiss, and he is gone.

He left her, and distracted sprung

 To where his courser stood ;

Himself upon the steed he flung

In wild impatient mood. 305
 Then dash'd the rowels in his flank,
 And spurr'd him up the steepy bank:
 Whilst Iölande alone,
 With wistful glance gazed keenly still,
 While fast the tear-drops fell, 310
 Till o'er the summit of the hill,
 He waved his last farewell.

XV.

Count Conrad seeks a distant land,
 'Gainst paynim foes to wield the brand.
 'Tis hers a heavier fate to bear— 315
 A hated bridegroom's suit to hear,
 And praises loathsome to her ear,
 From one a father's stern command
 Has destined for his daughter's hand:
 And that one, too, a haughty lord, 320
 Whose sight and presence she abhorr'd:
 But still, at her proud sire's request,
 He came an oft invited guest.

XVI.

When Conrad went, a summer's bloom

Sat light on every flower, 325

A summer's breeze bore sweet perfume

From every rosy bower.

Since Conrad join'd the far crusade,

A few brief months had past,

The drooping flower was seen to fade, 330

The leaf was falling fast.

These blossoms by the breezes shaken,

Another summer shall awaken ;

But 'tis not so with yon fair flower,

Now sinking to decay ; 335

That plant has felt a baneful power,

And withers fast away.

A deathlike chill that flower has blighted,

On it the canker-worm has lighted ;

Its venom to the core has sunk, 340

And deeply of its spirit drunk ;

Not rudely by the tempest torn,
But softly fading, gently worn.

XVII.

Since Conrad had to battle gone,
The mirth of Iölande had flown; 345
And oft amid the forest green
Alone she sought their parting scene,
To gaze upon the torrent's flood,
While all was hush'd and still;
Or on that wilderness of wood 350
That widely hill o'er hill
Outstretch'd, in far succession lost,
Till grief would all her hopes exhaust.
The swallow mid his fleet career
Seem'd for her sorrows all too gay, 355
As, circling o'er the streamlet clear,
He chased the insect prey;
And e'en the mellow tinkling bell
Upon her ear unwelcome fell,

As pass'd at eve the herd along ; 360

Then would the peasant check his song,

As o'er the rock she stood,

In fear that his too lively strain

Might with the sorrow mingle pain

To one so fair and good ; 365

And she reply with bitter smile,

As humbly he went on the while,

And doff'd his bonnet as he pass'd,

And sigh'd to see that sorrow cast

So deep a gloom on one so gay, 370

Still kind as in her happier day.

With grief she heard the warbler wake

His vespers in the leafy brake,

But joy'd to hear the nightingale

Relate her melancholy tale ; 375

Or watch'd the wild bee through the bower,

That roam'd in haste from flower to flower ;

Then lost in reverie :—

“ And thus, perhaps, does Conrad roam ;

“ Alas ! why comes he not ? 380

“ Fallen or faithless, far from home,

“ His Iölande forgot !

“ Sleep’st thou ? or, waking, on a foreign shore,

“ Dost think on thy lost love no more ?

“ Nay, sure that may not be.” 385

And then would start, as though the pain

Of some deep pang shot o’er her brain.

“ And I, perchance, may soon be led

“ To fill a hated husband’s bed ;

“ And Conrad, when he seeks his bride, 390

“ May find her by another’s side.”

XVIII.

Few know th’ emotions of the breast

Of one whose every wish was blest

With each desire her bosom sought ;

Whose heart unconscious had been taught 395

To count its own each sense of joy

With him who did each thought employ ;

For still with him her fancies stray,

Albeit he wends far away.

Few know, and fewer wish to know, 400
That sense of deep despair and woe,
When every feeling of the heart
Is rudely rent and torn apart,
And tyrant fear bestows, perforce,
The hand that's given in remorse:— 405
Thus Iölande felt, and vainly strove
To Vianden's haughty lord to prove,
That Albert ne'er could win her love,
And she could never be his bride.
Count Albert was not thus denied, 410
For still he came Lord Vianden's guest,
And keenly still the suit he press'd.
Yet Iölande fondly day by day
Has sought and urged a vain delay,
In hope that Conrad still should come 415
And save her from the heavy doom.

XIX.

'Twas an autumn eve, at the vesper's hour,
The holy mass was sung,

And forth from Vianden's lofty tower
The merry chime had rung ; 420
The setting sun's last western beam
Had flush'd the sky, and gilt the stream,
And hill, and dale, and forest glade,
Were mellow'd by the lengthen'd shade ;
When mounted on a coal-black horse, 425
Whose gait bespoke the weary course
That he for many a mile had traced
O'er barren heath or desert waste,
Equipp'd with sword, and shield, and spear,
Was seen a steel clad cavalier : 430
And eager up the rocky way
He urged his panting steed,
As though he fear'd the closing day
Would fail him at his need.
Thus up the Kammerwalden's height 435
Impatiently he press'd,
Till Vianden burst upon his sight,
Then gave his charger rest.

He heeded not the reddened beam
That lit the sky, and gilt the stream ; 440
Nor gazed upon the rapid flow
Of that fair river far below.
But long with steadfast glance he gazed,
Where Vianden's towers lay ;
As though that view the image raised 445
And thoughts of former day.

XX.

And well I ween 'twas a noble sight,
As chequer'd in light and obscurity,
Was shed the uncertain sunbeam's light,
On tower and rampart fitfully ; 450
And glanced on corselet, helm, and plume,
Of noble knight, of squire, and groom ;
And show'd the guests in vestures gay,
Who gather'd there in long array.
But other thoughts than those of joy 455
Did all that traveller's mind employ ;

And mingled doubt, dismay, and fear,
Beneath his eye-lid raised the tear.
When some poor friar who wended there,
His scanty dole of alms to share, 460
Had cross'd his track, and with bended knee,
Moan'd forth his benedicite,
The horseman, starting, turn'd him round,
He cast a kruitzer on the ground,
And thus he stopp'd the old man's way:— 465
“ Stay, holy father, pause and say,
“ Wherefore those sounds of revelry?
“ Why gleams that light at the fall of night?
“ Why ring those peals so merrily?
“ Why gather those guests?”—“ In Vianden's tower,
“ Sir Knight,” he replied, “ at the even tide, 471
“ Young Albert of Metternich woos his bride;
“ And this night, 'tis said, at the midnight hour,
“ He wins the fair but reluctant hand
“ Of the true and the heart-broken Iölande: 475
“ And he long has tried, but the suit she denied,

“ For a braver her heart had won ;
“ But that knight is afar to the holy war,
“ With Godfrey de Bouillon gone ;
“ And for long, ’tis said, he has join’d the dead, 480
“ And long did the maiden pine ;
“ And oft she sought if the pilgrim brought
“ Her tidings from Palestine :
“ Though no tidings came, yet the maiden’s flame
“ Was faithful and constant still ; 485
“ But to-night she is wed, like a victim led
“ By her haughty father’s will :
“ God speed thee, Sir Knight, if thou journey’st there,
“ For already the guests for the feast prepare”—
He said, and he wended on. 490
But Conrad heard but the fatal word—
To-night thy bride is won.

XXI.

His head sinks low, his eyes grow dim,
His dizzy senses turn and swim,

The current rushes through each vein, 495
And thrills each quivering nerve with pain ;
When Conrad flings him down to drink
Beside yon gurgling fountain's brink,
And stoops to quench his parching thirst,
And cool his fever'd brain ; 500
But fountains cannot swage the burst
Of heartfelt, hopeless pain.

XXII.

Meantime in Vianden's halls to-night,
Both noble and gentle and lady bright
Are come their part in the scene to bear ; 505
And in festive groups and with mirthful air,
They lightly move in the mazy dance,
In joyous time to the harmony
Of the music that sounds as the groups advance,
Or retire in mirth and in revelry. 510
The board is spread for the festival,
The guests are met in the knightly hall,

And joy has chased even thought away
From every heart; and all are gay—
No! there is one with a joyless heart, 515
There is one who should bear the foremost part
In that mirth, whose eye should be gladdest now,
With the lightest breast and the brightest brow,
The youthful, tender, and lovely bride,
A victim bound by a father's pride, 520
That is wed this night to yon noble lord,
Who sits by her side at the festal board;
Who envied by each of that joyful band,
Is to win such a prize as the fair Iölande;
Who with playful smile but a haughty air 525
Repeats soft words to the lovely fair,
Whose heedless ear and downcast eye
Appear to hearken him listlessly;
While her quivering lip, and her bloodless cheek,
Seem, sunk in woe, from her soul to speak, 530
(Although there escaped neither accent nor word)
Of broken troth, and of former love,

Of vows exchanged, of a hated lord,
And her true knight gone. Thus her bosom strove
With bitter grief and stifled sigh, 535
'Mid all the pangs of memory.

XXIII.

High on his throne, as sovereign lord,
Count Vianden seated at the board,
Is gazing round with a brow of pride,
Whose very glance inquire defied, 540
While haughty scorn disdains to show
The feelings that his heart may know :
Though thus conceal'd, his eye intent
Upon his daughter oft is bent.
With careless mood, he ill could feign 545
The freedom from a father's pain :
Perchance he felt his haughty wrath
Had ta'en too stern and rude a path ;
And in her eye and wasted form
Perceived Disease's canker-worm, 550

And wish'd that bridal were not made ;
 But that repentance pride forbade,
 While stern resolve, parental love,
 In deep and bitter conflict strove.
 The minstrel waked a mournful air ; 555
 He chose a theme both sad and fair,
 The chords he swept, the rafters rung,
 And thus the aged minstrel sung ;
 And sung as though that maiden's heart
 Alone were worthy of his art. 560

XXIV.

Song.

“ No moon shone dim in the vault of heaven,
 With her pale and her silver light,
 Nor the glimmering rays of the stars were given
 Like gems in the deep midnight.
 The abodes of the Seraphim hid from view 565
 By the misty forms were clouded ;

Which, borne on the wings of the tempest, flew,
And the sky in their gloom enshrouded.
But a warrior good, prick'd through the green wood,
And over the wild, wide heath, 570
Where no mansion stood, and where solitude
Ruled silent, and still as death ;
Where track there was none that mortal had gone,
To guide his footstep aright ;
And no moon-beam shone on the grass or the stone,
In the murky depth of night. 576
So he cast his rein on his courser's mane,
And onward he wended slowly ;
And oft would he stay on his lonely way,
In grief and in melancholy. 580
And in vain was borne that warrior's horn,
Though the blast full clearly sounded,
The note seem'd to mourn in that wild forlorn,
'Mid the stillness that reign'd around it.
Onward he rode, where the heath and the fern 585
No signs of man betray ;

Save in the knoll of yon moss grown cairn,
The bones of warriors lay.
He appear'd as the sprite of the nameless dead,
Raised whence the corpse was buried ; 590
For at midnight dread from their restless bed
The sinful ghosts are hurried.
So well might he seem, for the land of his birth
Now a houseless home denied him ;
And he may ride forth o'er the thankless earth, 595
With nought but his sword beside him."

XXV.

While thus he sung, fair Iölande
O'er her throbbing brow had pass'd her hand ;
Her trembling frame, and heaving breast,
The tear that on her eye-lid hung, 600
The quivering lip, and voice suppress'd
That falter'd on her tongue,
Reveal'd what painful memory
That mournful tale restored ;

And call'd to mind each early tie, 605

And every fond record.

Her eye gleam'd like a dying lamp,

Her death-like brow was chill and damp;—

She, starting, rose with dismal shriek,

And backward on the pavement sank.— 610

Her eye is closed—from her pallid cheek

And trembling lip the blood has shrank.

They sought around for the sight she fear'd,

But the vision that caused it had disappear'd.

They sought around, but in vain they sought, 615

For no form was seen in the spacious hall,

That so fearful a change on her mind had wrought,

And that might such thoughts to her breast recall.

XXVI.

On the threshold stone was a gauntlet thrown,

And beside, a scroll of parchment lay, 620

That challenged the knight to a single fight,

And reclaim'd the bride of a former day.

But the form no more at the chamber door

Of him who challenged was seen to stay;

For with fleeting pace, but a moment's space, 625

He had darken'd the high archway.

And the yeomen tall, in the knightly hall,

Of that sight can little say,

For when each was ask'd, he gazed round aghast,

In fear and in deep dismay. 630

They had seen the knight like a meteor's light,

Or phantom from the dead ;

Like the lightning's flame, so that horseman came,

Was a moment seen, and fled.

They ask'd of the guard if the gates were barr'd, 635

Or who pass'd by the barbican ?

They replied—" At speed on a coal-black steed,

" They had seen an armed man :

" And from head to heel, he was sheath'd in steel,

" With the shield of a red cross knight; 640

" And a sable plume gave a deeper gloom

" To his dark eye's swarthy light.

“ And amid the throng he had pass’d along,
“ And nought he had deign’d to hear ;
“ And he left them behind, as he pass’d like the wind,
“ In wild and in fleet career.” 646

XXVII.

Then the laughter light on that awful night
Was banish’d from each eye ;
And in vain they tried with the trembling bride,
To renew the nuptial tie. 650
For her fancy ranged, like a mind estranged,
And her voice was wild and shrill ;
And, mid fear and grief, her words were brief,
And they spoke of woe and ill.
For she often spoke of a promise broke, 655
And call’d on her Conrad’s name ;
Of a former oath, and of plighted troth,
Her love had return’d to claim.

XXVIII.

The priest is standing the altar beside,
And the haughty bridegroom waits his bride ; 660
The chorus have raised the vocal strain,
 Till the lofty roof and the vaulted aisle,
 And the ample space of the gothic pile
Gives back the voice again.
Then Iölande clasp'd her father's knee, 665
She begg'd the bridal might not be ;
And, sobbing mid her tears, implored
To wed her not to a hated lord.

XXIX.

Then did the despot's stubborn ire
 Bend to a father's fears, 670
And proud Ambition's high desire
 Yield to Affection's tears.
He turn'd and said,—“ Sir count, to-night
“ We dare not celebrate the rite,
“ Since thus some spectre from the dead 675
“ Has cast a warning deep and dread.

“ But wait we till the morning hour,
“ When evil sprites resign their power ;
“ Till Iölande chase that idle fear,
“ And from her eye-lid dry the tear.” - 680

Then rose on Albert's brow the cloud,
And thus, with answer stern and proud,
He scornful spoke of knights in mail,
Upraised by idle minstrel's tale,
Of warrior arm'd with helm and sword, 685
Depending on a yeoman's word.

As bursts the kindled flame by dint
Of spark elicited from flint,
So flush'd Lord Vianden's cheek with ire,
So seem'd his eye to kindle fire, 690
While thus he spoke—“ If such a jest
“ Thus practised on each honour'd guest
“ Be thought a fit device and art
“ To grace the rank and noble part

“ Of Vianden’s lord—if such design 695

“ By Metternich is argued mine,

“ Then know that thou hast deeply lied!—

“ To-morrow shall the truth decide.”

While with his words the rafters rung,

His glove Lord Vianden sternly flung; 700

With folded arms upon his breast,

In anger from the hall he went.

All mirth and laughter is repress’d,

On Albert every eye is bent.

The warm blood to his forehead flew, 705

With blackest wrath his glove he threw,

In proud defiance and exchange—

“ To-morrow justice has revenge.”

XXX.

On mountain and valley the sun shone down,

On the Ours’ wild stream, and on Vianden’s town,

When on that fateful day intent, 711

Fair dames and lords from Vianden went,

To witness if the phantom knight
Redeem'd the gage he gave for fight ;
To witness how each knight should prove, 715
Who thus for battle pledged his glove.
Th' arena was yon valley's space,
Enclosed by stream and mountain's base,
Which with the plain not softly blent,
Abruptly rose with rude ascent ; 720
Where rock o'er rock raised high its front,
 Steep, rugged, and uneven,
Whose hoary brows have borne the brunt
 Of many a stormy heaven.

XXXI.

'Tis noon—the nameless cavalier, 725
Who challenged first, does not appear ;
Count Albert cast some taunting jest,
His spear Lord Vianden placed in rest.
When wheeling round the rocky screen,
On sable steed the knight was seen. 730

He came—and with a single bound,
He clear'd the barriers of the ground ;
All arm'd in steel—a lady's glove
Bore token of his plighted love ;
One sigh to her, one glance to Heaven, 735
For favour and protection given.
His lance in rest, and ready dight,
Count Conrad waits the rival knight.—
The trumpets sound—the rowels sank
Full deeply in each charger's flank : 740
But Albert's fiery courser rear'd,
Nor word nor threat nor urging fear'd ;
Nor felt the warning of the steel,
Or, if he felt, seem'd not to feel.
As shaft from bow, or lightning's flame, 745
On wings of wind young Conrad came ;
And Albert's charger wheeling round,
His breast laid open to the wound :
Each voice is still, and hush'd each breath,
In dread suspense for Albert's death. 750

E'en now they meet in desperate shock,
The spear is levell'd for the stroke,
And pointed true on Albert's breast—
I had forborne to tell the rest.
But ere the foemen closed in fight, 755
As loath to wound an unarm'd knight,
He raised the spear point o'er his breast,
And touched his adversary's crest.
Count Albert fell; and loud and long
Arose th' applauses of the throng; 760
There stunn'd he lay, yet soon again
Arose young Albert from the plain:
Each combatant with anger burns,
And fiercely to the strife returns.
The herald blows the bugle sound 765
Whilst Conrad wheels his charger round:
And thrice he waves his spear on high,
And raises thrice his battle cry:
Then firm in sell, his spear in rest,
While hope and courage nerve his breast, 770

He spurs him to the fight.

Each cavalier has run his course—

Now man to man and horse to horse,

Each strives with knightly skill and force

To foil his foeman's might. 775

The warriors close, as strongly brave,

As meet two vessels o'er the wave ;

So fierce the shock, as bended branch

Each horse recoils upon his haunch,

And headlong is Count Albert borne, 780

As hound that meets the goring horn

Of red-deer, brought to bay.

Then knight and courser strew'd the ground,

And stream'd the red blood from his wound

As sunk in death he lay. 785

XXXII.

In vain were every human aid,

Count Albert now in rest is laid,

For deeply Conrad's lance had sunk,

And fully of his life-blood drunk.

While loud the throng their voices raise 790
In glad acclaim of Conrad's praise,
Why stands he thus in thoughtful mood,
And gazes on the scene of blood?
Why heeds he not the shouts of praise
With which the throng their voices raise? 795
Why answers not the joyous cry
Of her who hails his victory?
He faintly roused him at the sound,
And gazed with vacant eye around.
But mark—now gushing from his side 800
The red blood flows in fullest tide;—
He droop'd—and from his courser sank,
While fast his blood the pasture drank;
For weak from wounds received before,
Whose unheal'd scars his body bore, 805
Exhausted with the weary way,
And all the toil of yesterday,
And wounded by Count Albert's spear;
Altho' the hurt were not severe,

For one in fullest force and strength, 810

But all combined o'ercame at length

His feeble frame, and as he fell,

That moment's anguish who can tell ;

Or who describe what bitter pang

Through every nerve of Iölande rang ; 815

What feelings moved her throbbing breast,

As to his side she fondly press'd ;

Or what emotions shook her frame,

While calling wildly on his name,

She clasp'd his drooping arm. 820

He spoke not, sigh'd not, but his look,

Albeit he smiled, too much partook

Of pain and death's alarm.

XXXIII.

His ready aid the leech applied,

They stanch'd the current from his side ; 825

They moved the corslet from his breast,

And helm that on his forehead press'd :

When thus he breathed more free again,
They gently raised him from the plain,
And borne upon a palfrey light, 830
To Vianden led the wounded knight ;
Along the soft and grassy road,
By which the Ours' wild waters flow'd ;
And by his side young Iölande clung—
How fair she look'd ! The tear-drop hung 835
In her soft eye ; her ringlets flung
All loosely in the wind ; her veil
Hid not a cheek less purely pale ;
Her bosom throb'd, her melting eye
Was fix'd in deep intensity. 840
While Conrad faint, and rack'd by pain,
Was borne to Vianden towers again ;
How changed from him, who blithe and gay,
Had left it on a former day.

XXXIV.

Reclined he lay, nor saw nor knew 845
How days, or hours, or moments flew ;

Each friendly face and form forgot ;
Unmoved he met, he knew them not :
Yet Iölande was a name that fell
Upon his memory like a spell, 850
On which his faltering tongue would dwell,
And thence away. His mind would sink,
Where words gave no connecting link ;
In thoughtlessness of thought he lay
Beneath the fever's ruthless sway : 855
Nor food he touch'd, whilst from his eye
Five dreary nights did slumber fly ;
Till strain'd, the ball was like to burst
Beneath the lid, and parching thirst
Was burning on his fever'd tongue, 860
And life in trembling balance hung ;
And Iölande oft beside his bed,
Observed Disease's baneful tread :
In mind estranged, and tortured brain,
That writhed beneath the pangs of pain. 865

XXXV.

In such an hour if prayers avail,
Sure now their virtue cannot fail;
For never prayer on earth was given
By form more like to forms in heaven,
Or which we liken to divine, 870
Than she who now before the shrine,
Though fair in mirth, in grief more fair,
With streaming eye and floating hair,
In deepest woe and sorrow bending,
Her hours in fervent vows is spending; 875
Each bead has counted o'er in prayer,
Each holy saint implored to spare
The youth o'er whose devoted head
Grim death by such a slender thread
Is held, that some brief moments more 880
May see his pain and anguish o'er.

XXXVI.

It could not last.—Now long sought sleep
Has hush'd him with her balmy wing,

A long, soft sleep, so still and deep,
 That rest will to the patient bring, 885
 And life—or soon release from pain.
 But gaze on her whose throbbing vein
 Beats fast with ebb and flow of blood,
 As watching o'er the scene, she view'd
 The tide of fever turn at length, 890
 And yield unto his youthful strength;
 And Conrad from his stupor waking:
 Then joy, in wildest transport breaking,
 In gladdest tumult thrill'd her frame,
 While Conrad call'd upon her name— 895
 “ My own, my dearest Iölande!”
 And seized, and kiss'd, and kiss'd her hand.

XXXVII.

Not daylight to the seaman toss'd
 On Pontus' angry main,
 Not fountains to the Arab lost 900
 On Bagdad's sandy plain,

When agonized with parching thirst,

Could half such joy impart,

As that which then on Iölande burst

When Conrad press'd her to his heart; 905

When health's new vigour came at last,

With life restored and danger past;

When Conrad was relieved from pain,

And clasp'd her in his arms again.

XXXVIII.

Count Albert sleeps beneath the aisle 910

Of that antique and lofty pile,

Where high in gloomy pomp recline

Proud Metternich's ennobled line.

If others Albert's death may grieve,

To them we will their sorrows leave, 915

And let him rest within the shroud;

For buried there, the grave contains

Count Vianden's pride and wrath,

And not a shade of envious cloud,

Nor speck of adverse gloom remains 920

To darken Iölande's path ;

Or dim the brightness of her heaven,

That now shone clear, serene, and even.

Her father's heart at length relented—

At length his stubborn pride consented 925

To grant the suit so long denied,

That Iölande should be Conrad's bride.

XXXIX.

Then, off!—ye scenes of sorrow, off!—

Let grief her sable mantle doff ;

Let pride a milder garb assume, 930

And pleasure reign in sorrow's room :

Now let the joyful bridal torch

More brightly gleam in Vianden's porch,

From Love's fair altar lit.

Now wake the dance, and tune the lute, 935

With gayer heart and lighter foot ;

While Beauty's eye with gladness glistens,

As to her lover's tale she listens.

Now strike the cymbal, sound the fife,
And call the trumpet's voice to life : 940
For Conrad and for Iölande,
Since now the sacred bridal band
The holy priest has knit.

Let unalloy'd, unmingled measure,
Now mantle in the cup of pleasure ; 945
Since thus the fairest weds the best—
So Love is crown'd, and Beauty blest.

CONCLUSION.

Ah, "alas ! what can beauty or valour avail !
How forgotten and lone is the scene of the tale !
Like the dreams of the morning or clouds in the sky
With the days of romance and of proud chivalry : 951
So the issue of Conrad and fair Iölande
Have been swept from the earth by the pitiless hand
Of disease, and of time, and of battle's commotion,
As the tempest that sweeps o'er the breast of the ocean ;
And the power of Vianden has vanish'd away, 956
And Brandenburg's castle has fall'n to decay ;
Though tenantless now, and unroof'd to the sky,
Yet matchless in beauty they still may defy
The art of the limner or poetry's praise, 960
Such a picture to paint, such an image to raise.
Go, traveller, hasten such beauty to view,
And the day-dreams of fancy again to renew,
Give the reins to Conception, let Fancy run high,
And awaken the powers of wild Memory. 965

Go, and stand upon Vianden's most loftiest tower,
And lament o'er the ruins of chivalrous power ;
For sure such a scene, so forlorn, so sublime,
Will recall the parade of the chivalrous time.
Go, and enter the lofty baronial hall, 970
And imagine the scene of the high festival :
Can thy fancy with torches the chamber illumine ?
Dost see glancing of helmet and waving of plume ?
Canst imagine fair damsels of lineage high,
With the nobles of Germany's bold chivalry, 975
And see how each honour'd and loftier guest
Is array'd on the Dais as befits him the best,
While they who are lower in order and birth,
Though more low at the banquet, are equal in mirth ?—
In mirth, or th' appearance of pleasure at least, 980
For such all must wear who are guests at the feast.

Now change we the scene, view that chamber again,
And raise up the terrors of feudal domain :
See the vassals and peers, and their proud sovereign ;

And behold them like warriors all seated in state, 985
To judge and decree on the merciless fate
Of-yonder poor captive, whose cankering chain
Enhances the keenness of woe and of pain
That fester his limbs all defiled with his gore,
At each step that he takes down that chamber floor ; 990
But if thou'rt unable such scenes to recall,
Then, stranger, go—visit not Vianden hall,
For there thou wilt see but a mouldering wall,
All blacken'd by time, and now crumbling to dust,
With its stancheons all mildew'd with age and with rust;
While the arches all shatter'd and buttresses riven, 996
Have rent the broad vault to the tempests of heaven.

Come, follow me now to the chapel's fair space,
And mark ye each scene in that holiest place ;
Imagine it deck'd for the bridal array, 1000
And adorn'd for the pomp of a proud holiday.
Behold here the bridegroom, and there stood the bride ;
All around were the nobles array'd in their pride ;

The columns all wreath'd with the myrtle and vine,
Where nature and art do their beauties entwine : 1005
See the chalice of frankincense shedding perfume,
And enshrouding the altar in shadowy gloom,
Till even the daylight of heaven is dim :
Then hark ! how the choristers waken the hymn,
How it vibrates each chord, how it thrills every limb :
How the sound is re-echoed from cornice and stone, 1011
Till the voices return round the wide octagon.
If, stranger, thou canst not such images raise,
Then Vianden heeds neither thy scorn nor thy praise ;
For there thou canst see but how war and how time,
How avarice's grasp and a pitiless clime 1016
Have wrought on the structure of days that are gone,
And left but rude masses of mouldering stone,
All tangled with weeds and with brier o'ergrown ;
Where the reptile most vile o'er the ruins may crawl,
And the still bat may flit by the tottering wall ; 1021
Where dwells the night owlet and carrion bird,
And the voice of the raven at midnight is heard.

Ay, such were the days of the proud chivalry,
So fraught with oppression and foul tyranny ; 1025
But if ye would learn where true happiness dwells,
Where liberty, virtue, and friendship excels,
Where freedom of soul, and where honour and worth
Are coupled with rank and with noblest birth,
Go, see where the sun on yon tower is streaming, 1030
Whence far down the valley its whiteness is gleaming ;
There liberty, virtue, and honour excels,
'Neath the towers of Berg, where the true baron dwells,
Whose frankness of heart, as a generous lord,
Bids welcome each guest to his banquet and board ;
While all by the bountiful host is supplied 1036
Without the display of parade or of pride ;
And the baron's free wit, and his humour and mirth,
Flow fast round the guests that encircle his hearth.
Now mark ye the baroness' gracefulest mien, 1040
Say where such a form and such charms may be seen,

Such elegance, softness, and fairness combined;
Yet these graces a rival have found in a mind
Of texture as delicate, gentle, and kind :
So friendly, so courteous to every guest, 1045
It imparts a new joy to her generous breast
To supply each desire ere the wish be express'd :
Sure nature made few in so perfect a mould,
And few like the baron so lively and bold.

To yon easy chair next our thoughts we direct— 1050
The goodly old grandame claims double respect
For virtue and noble deportment, and age
And goodness of heart—may our praises engage,
'Tis the part, noble lady, most pleasing to thee,
To caress the gay prattler that lisps at thy knee ; 1055
And troth, little Marie, each gladly enow
Would caress such a fair blue-eyed cherub as thou ;
And add to these joys too the gladdening sound,
As boyhood in innocence gambols around,
And then thou shalt know where true pleasures are found.

NOTES.

Note 1, page 3, lines 1 and 2.

*“ Proud Vianden’s towers are tall and steep,
“ And Ours’ wild stream is broad and deep,” &c.*

I HAVE attempted in the above and several following lines to give some idea of the beautiful and romantic situation of the castle of Vianden, which is thus described by Bertholet, in his History of the Duchy of Luxembourg:—“ Le chateau de Vi-
enne, que les Allemands appellent Vianden, est construit sur la pointe d’un rocher escarpé, à la manière des anciennes forteresses de la province. La rivière d’Ouren baigne ses murailles d’un côté, et la ville bâtie de l’autre, en forme d’arc, est ceinte d’un rempart.”

Note 2, page 4, line 28.

“ Baldwin, Vianden’s princely lord.”

It appears, from Bertholet, that from the earliest antiquity the Counts of Vianden were possessed of very wide domains and extensive jurisdiction; he mentions no less than twenty-one fiefs holden of the Counts of Vianden as their superior lord; and adds—“ Nous lisons que la ville et le chateau de ce nom étaient possédés par des seigneurs, qui vers l’an 711 portaient déjà le titre de comte, au temps de Childebert, Roi de France.” Vol. iii. p. 424.

Note 3, page 4, lines 29 and 30.

“ And he has sought for his Iölande

“ Some wealthy knight’s or noble’s hand.”

That the name of Iölande is historical appears from the following passage in Bertholet:—“ Yolende naquit vers l’an 1231, et reçut au Baptême le nom d’Yolende de son ayeule maternelle épouse de Pierre, de Courtenay, et fille de Bandouin IV. Comte de Haynaut.”

And we are informed by Gibbon, in his Account of the Family of Courtenay, that Peter of Courtenay married the sister of the Counts of Flanders, the two first Emperors of Constantinople; hence the heroine of the tale is not only an historical character, but allied to one of the noblest families in this country, and the most ancient in the world.

Note 4, page 5, line 41.

“ But when did true love’s course run smooth?”

“ The course of true love never did run smooth.”

Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Note 5, page 6, lines 56 and 57.

“ Thus Conrad of Brandenburg sought in vain

“ The favour of Vianden’s lord to gain.”

The family of Brandenburg was one of the most illustrious houses of the Duchy of Luxembourg. The castle of the same name, the chief seat of the family, is situated upon the summit of a rugged rock, between two mountains overhanging a small

stream called the Blese ; and, though now in ruins, still displays much of the sternness and grandeur of feudal ages.

While admiring the ruins of this magnificent baronial castle, we were joined by the priest of the village, a fine old man of eighty years of age, excepting two months and three days, as he informed us, with a fractional accuracy important on arriving at the age of four-score. On being told that we were two English Protestants, he exclaimed, “ Ah ! what a pity : if I were “ younger, I would undertake their conversion ; but now I am too “ old :—but you, baron,” turning to the person who had addressed him, “ you have plenty of time, why don’t you ? Alas ! what “ a pity that those young men should be heretics ; and coming “ from that country, too, which has produced some of our best “ and most illustrious Catholics ; entre autres,” continued he, “ nos deux grands Bonifazius et Willibrord.” Which worthies were, I find, two English monks, famous for false miracles and priestcraft, who went over to that country some time about the year 680 !

Note 6, page 6, lines 66 and 67.

“ *But Iölande was a mountain child,*

“ *In spirit undisguised and wild,*” &c.

I am afraid it may be thought, from the following passage in Bertholet, that the character of Iölande is not very correctly drawn.

“ Dès sa plus tendre enfance, elle donna des presages certains de la sainteté à laquelle elle parviendrait un jour. La beauté de son visage répondit à la candeur de son âme ; sa modestie ravissoit tout le monde, la solidité de ses réponses “ n’avait rien de puérile, et la maturité de son jugement sur-

“ passait de beaucoup son âge. A tant de belles qualités, Yolende joignait une piété rare, et un penchant merveilleux pour les choses célestes.”

And in another place the old jesuit gives the following anecdote concerning Iölande:—“ Un jour qu'on lui demanda si elle voulait se marier: Quoi! repliqua-t-elle, me marier à un homme mortel! ah! il n'en scra rien, celui que j'épousera ne m'abandonnera jamais, et il sera toujours avec moi. Tel est l'objet de mes affections, et tel sera-t-il constamment: je renonce à tous les époux du monde.”

Note 7, page 24, lines 383 and 384.

“ *Sleep'st thou? or, waking, on a foreign shore,*

“ *Dost think on thy lost love no more?*”

The sentiment expressed in the lines above, perhaps, somewhat resembles that contained in the first stanza of Bürger's beautiful ballad, Leonora.

Lenore fuhr um's Morgenroth,

Empor aus schweren Traümen,

“ Bist untreu Wilhelm, oder todt?

“ Wie lange willst du säumen?”

THE
CASTLE OF LANDECK.
A SCENE IN THE TYROL.

“ Among the mountains of the Tyrol the native zeal of a few hardy peasants achieved more than all the mighty population of Germany. This ancient province of the house of Austria had been, in sinful violation of all the rights of mankind, transferred to the hated yoke of Bavaria by the treaty of Presburg. The mountaineers no sooner heard that their rightful sovereign was once more in arms against Napoleon, than they rose (early in April), under the guidance of Hofer, a gallant peasant, seized the strong passes of their country, and, in the course of four days, made every French and Bavarian soldier quartered among them a prisoner,—with the exception of the garrison of the fortress of Kufstein. Napoleon caused Lefevre to march into the country with his division; but Hofer posted his followers on the edge of precipices, from which they fired on the French columns with the skill of practised marksmen, and rolled down torrents of stones with such effect, that Lefevre was compelled to retreat.”—*The History of Napoleon Buonaparte*, vol. ii. p. 62.

THE
CASTLE OF LANDECK.

I'VE wander'd far through many a foreign land,
And praised the varied works of nature's hand,
Yet few compare with thee, majestic Inn,
Where mid thy mountains with a ceaseless din
Thou foamest headlong amid rock and stone, 5
Or now more grandly stern, thou rollest on.
Few lands, like this, the glorious fame obtain,
That at no time it bore the victor's chain;
Here native freedom fix'd her lofty throne,
And spurr'd the champions whom she claim'd her own :
Thus they before the conqueror never knelt; 11
Thus they the victor's fetters never felt :

Few lands can rouse the spirit, stir the soul,
Like thy rude mountains, wild and gay Tyrol!
Few castles stand so stern and proud, a wreck 15
Of war and ages past, as thine, Landeck.
'Twas thus methought, while long I gazed on high,
On thy strong walls, and heard the stream roll by;
I found a path, whose narrow steepness led
To where proud Landeck rears his lofty head: 20
Steep rose the pathway, rugged, and uneven;
Nought, save the mountain goat, might there be driven,
So narrow was that footway's rocky ledge,
So steep it wound around the cliff's rude edge;
Yet onward still along the way I climb, 25
Whilst at each step the scene grows more sublime:
So high the mountains o'er my head arose,
So fast the Inn beneath my footstep flows,
With breathless haste I gain'd the feudal fort,
And doubtful enter'd in the castle-court; 30
Some broad steps led beneath an ancient porch,
Where stretch'd a hall, all vaulted like a church;

No church was this wide hall in days of yore,
For there stood many a massive iron door,
Whose cumbrous thickness closed the wretched cell,
Where tyrants sought to liken earth to hell. 36
I turn'd me in this vast and gloomy fort,
And enter'd in a small, but sunny court;
There sate a maiden, of some fair sixteen;
Lowly she seem'd in station, not in mien: 40
My unforeseen approach awoke surprise,
That lit the lustre of her brilliant eyes;
Whose hue was match'd but by the raven hair,
Which show'd a forehead as divinely fair
As it was finely form'd: she ceased an air 45
Of lively Tyrol, which, the while, she sung,
And ere the notes had died upon her tongue,
Up from her grassy seat the maiden rose,
While deep suffusion cheek and neck o'erflows—
Her fears have vanish'd, and a smile display'd 50
Fair pearls within her rosy lips array'd;

The beads of garnet strung around her neck
Reveal'd the beauties they presumed to deck ;
Her sleeves were border'd with a ruffled fringe,
Fantastically gay, and free from tinge ; 55
And o'er her snowy breast the bodice laced,
Descended graceful to her slender waist ;
There gather'd round, her short and russet gown
Fell o'er her well form'd limbs, but scanty down
To meet the hose that Tyrol's maidens use, 60
And show'd beneath her neatly buckled shoes.

So small her mouth, high nose, and fairest face,
A form so truly measured, and a grace
The which so well her antique dress became,
All look'd a portrait stepping from the frame ; 65
A portrait, too, of rich and costly worth,
Of maid of noble line, not lowly birth :
Such was this maiden, in her fairest bloom,
And such her tasteful, but her rare costume.

She beckon'd me within, and waved her hand, 70
Nor I reluctant answer'd her command ;
Within a hall an elder matron sate,
And watch'd a babe intently and sedate,
And whilst I enter'd from her seat arose,
Still careful watch'd that infant's soft repose. 75
Few words I spoke, for why, but few I could,
Yet those few made me fairly understood ;
I was a traveller, one who sought to see
Whate'er of curious in their land might be.
She smiled, and welcomed me, and led the way, 80
While faithful follow'd with its lively play
A noble hound, that first suspicious lay :
Through many a gloomy hall we wander'd on,
And chamber vaulted with its arch of stone ;
At length we reach'd a hall, whose floor inlaid, 85
And well carved wainscot better times display'd,
Ere lord and vassals parted from these halls,
And gave the wind to whistle through the walls.
Since then have ages glided fleetly by,
And with them much of feudal tyranny : 90

For follow where yon pale and glimmering light
Displays the murkiness of deep midnight,
In each of yonder columns hangs a ring—
That link of iron is a tell-tale thing ;
It tells the captive's history at his chain, 95
It speaks of hunger, sorrow, woe, and pain,
Where victims oft of ruthless tyranny
When doom'd within this cave to pine and die,
By men unpitied in their dark abode,
Upraised their hymns in praises of their God ; 100
Too oft, perhaps, the curse of deep despair
Was mingled with the voice of hymn and prayer,
When captives fetter'd in this dismal cell
Were destined here in endless grief to dwell :
Such oft within this prison-house have been. 105
Away ! we quit this melancholy scene
Of sorrow's bitter cry and torture's scream :
Let boldest freedom point a nobler theme.
And now return we to th' abodes of light ;
And mark yon eagle o'er the mountain's height, 110
How free he hovers in his gallant flight,

Flaps his strong wings in widely circling play :
Then, off—he cleaves his unforbidden way,
And whilst my glance pursued his track on high,
How throng'd my mind the thoughts of liberty : 115
How Tyrol's patriot heroes check'd the flight
Of France's eagle and her boundless might !
When war's wild tempest over Europe swept,
And prostrate nations 'neath the tyrant wept,
'Twas Tyrol check'd the course she could not stay, 120
Repell'd Ambition's too licentious sway,
And baffled e'en Napoleon's dauntless host.
And when, amid such brilliant visions lost,
I ask'd—“ How long since contest shook the vale ?”
How glow'd the matron's spirit at the tale ! 125
In hues how vivid, still how uneffaced
Her aged form within my mind is traced :
Whilst like a sibyl on the tower she stood,
And said—“ I saw the day of death and blood
“ When last on yonder steep and rocky path 130
“ Our mountaineers withstood th' invader's wrath :

“ Our foes were many, but our hearts were true ;
“ Though fast the deadly bolts of battle flew,
“ Yet freedom rose our vanquish’d foemen o’er.
“ I had a husband, and a son I bore— 135
“ I do not mourn for them—but both are gone—
“ A warrior’s honour’d tomb they bravely won.”
Then oft she call’d her son and husband blest,
Thus nobly felt the Spartan mother’s breast ;
Who e’en was joyful that her son should fall 140
In cause so glorious as his country’s call.
She mourn’d them not, but still within her eye
A tear-drop rose, which she was fain to dry
All unobserved.—I turn’d me for a space,
And gazed upon the lofty rampart’s base ; 145
How dread it beetled o’er the cliff so steep,
Terrifically grand—one single leap
Had plunged a hundred yards in depth below,
Within the stream where Inn’s wild waters flow.
How long from thence I gazed I scarcely knew, 150
For dizzy with the scene my senses grew.

I left the rampart, and my gladden'd sight
Soon changed the sense of horror for delight.
Some blooming flowers the raven beauty bore,
Her richest present—for she could no more : 155
A silken kerchief to the maid I gave,
And begg'd her for my sake the gift to save,
Which she received with heartfelt gratitude ;
And with repeated promise vow'd she would :
With much exchange of wish I bade adieu, 160
E'en sadly leaving hearts so kind and true.
Again the rocky path in haste descended,
And thus my strange, but glad adventure ended.

NOTES.

Note 1, page 74, line 94.

“ That link of iron is a tell-tale thing.”

“ That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain.”
Pris. of Chillon.

Note 2, page 76, line 139.

“ Thus nobly felt the Spartan mother’s breast.”

Argaleonis, the mother of Brasidas.

Plut. Apoph. Lacon.

PIERS COCKBURN.

A SCOTTISH BALLAD.

Pitscottie, in relation to the expedition of King James V. to Ettrick Forest and to the borders in 1529, informs us that the king "Syne after made a convention at Edinburgh with his whole lords and barons to consult how he might stanch all theft and reving within his realm, and cause the commons to live in peace, which long time had been perturbed before, for fault of good guiding of an old king. To this effect he made proclamations to all lords, barons, gentlemen, landwardmen, &c. ; and also warned all gentlemen that had good dogs to bring them that he might hunt in the said country as he pleased ; the which the Earl of Argyle, the Earl of Huntley, the Earl of Athole, and so all the rest of the gentlemen of the Highlands did, and brought their hounds with them in like manner to hunt with the king as he pleased. I heard say he slew in these bounds eighteen score of harts."—*Hist. of Scotland*. After this the king hanged over his own castle, Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception.

PIERS COCKBURN.

1.

THO' a pleasant month is bonny June,
And blithe the simmer day,
I speak of deeds, of sorrow dune,
A tale of dool and wae.

2.

Oh, Ettrick is a forest fair,
There wantons roe and hart;
A tower strang, it standeth there,
And built wi' mickle art.

3.

Wi' joy we look'd where Henderland
Aboon the forest rose,
For ne'er Piers Cockburn's door or hand
Against the puir wad close.

4.

The cushat gave her plaintive sang
Unto her mate so true ;
But aft the bonny woods amang,
Call'd loud the fause cuckoo.

5.

The cushat's note was soft and mild,
All on the greenwood tree ;
The cuckoo's tone was shrill and wild,
Of guile and treacherie.

6.

The cuckoo told how traitors rove
Of broken pledge and vow ;
The cushat now her tale of love
May change for tale of woe.

7.

The haughty eagle spread his wings,
And soar'd aboon the dale,
And told how tyrants, lords, and kings,
And ruthless deeds prevail.

8.

King James he to the hunting came,

And warn'd the barons strang,

And lords and knights of guidly name

Brought mony a hound along.

9.

They sought the deer wi' spear and bow,

Their bows the bowmen drew,

And mony a hart was slain, I trow,

And mony an arrow flew.

10.

They hunted them the braes amang,

They hunted merrily;

But the sun was strang, and the day was lang,

And hunters tire wearily.

11.

Up then rode a baron tall,

And to the king did say,

“ My liege, there stands my ancient hall,

“ A mile but barely twae.

12.

“ Now if it please my sovereign lord
“ To taste my humble feast,
“ I’se onward speed, to deck the board—
“ Ye’se be an honour’d guest.

13.

“ For we’ve hunted lang the braes amang,
“ We’ve hunted merrily;
“ Yet the day is lang, and the sun is strang,
“ And hunters tire wearily.”

14.

When came the king to the dark green sward,
Before that castell fair,
He wonder’d at the stately guard,
Beside the portal there.

15.

To meet the king the Baron ran,
Him and his royal cumpanie,—
“ Welleumme, great king, to Henderland,
“ An honour’d guest you’se be.

16.

“ Wellcumme, great king, wi’ me to dine,

“ I trust ye’ll bide wi’ me.”

Then freely flow’d the bluid red wine

Of France and Burgundie.

17.

“ Now pledge me, pledge me, sovereign lord,

“ So prove to me thy great mercie.”—

“ Belike to thee I’se haud my word,

“ For rief and treason thou maun die.

18.

“ For grete misdeeds thou dreest thy weird,

“ A’ lanely sall thy ladye be ;

“ Thy corse sall rot in bluidye eard,

“ Thy head aboon the tower hie.

19.

“ Now stand ye forth, my yeomen tall,

“ And seize the traitor thief.”—

“ Rise up,” Piers cried, “ my merryemen all,

“ Bring succour to your chief.”

20.

At that he grippit a twa hand blade,
Was hingin on the wa';
And straught a deidly stroke he made,
To wun out through them a'.

21.

Wi' cordis strang they bound him strait,
They bound him speidilie;
They ledd him bye the castell yett,
To hing on the greenwood tree.

22.

" Since ills betide," the borderer cried,
" Of evils wail the best,
" Wha wad na blithely thus hae died,
" And count his fortune blest.

23.

" Aye, he maun be a heartless knave,
" Wha wad na bend the knee
" To headsman's axe, and meet the grave,
" Than bow to tyrannie.

24.

“ I do not mourn my ladye gay,
“ Nor a’ my merryemen bauld,
“ But yet my heart is dool and wae,
“ My ha’ suld e’er a traitor hauld.”

25.

Then the king’s colour went and came
At ilka word he spake,
As flits the light of a dying flame,
On the night of a lang lyke waik.

26.

And much he said, and much he pray’d,
Yet never a whit sped he;
They hingit him till he was dead,
Hie upon the greenwood tree.

27.

At the corbie’s nest gin the earn appear—
Ill betide the wild corbie—
When Piers had ask’d his sovereign there,
He hingit him ower the tower hie.

28.

Oh wha wad own that traitor's breast,
For a' the thrones o' Christentie ;
May never he ken joy or rest,
Wha caused his host to die.

NOTES.

*“ Oh, Ettrick is a forest fair ;
“ There wantons roe and hart.”*

I HAVE attempted, in the foregoing Ballad, to imitate the style of some of the ballads in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; and how far I have succeeded remains to be determined. The foregoing verses bear too strong a resemblance to the opening stanza of the “ Sang of the Outlaw Murray,” not to be acknowledged.

Ettricke forest is a fair foreste,
In it grows many a semelie trie;
There’s hart, and hynd, and doe, and roe,
And of a’ wilde beastes grete plentie.
There’s a feir castelle, bigged wi’ lyme and stane,
Oh ! gin it stands not pleasauntlie !

Border Minst. vol. i. p. 85.

ISABEL.

A GERMAN BALLAD.

I S A B E L.

1.

OH! who has not heard of the fair Isabel,
The purest of maidens that dwelt by the Rhine?
And who has not heard of the fate that befel
The Lord of the Castle of prond Hohenstein?

2.

Earl Walter, though vainly, unceasingly strove,
Count Godfrey had won the fair Isabel's heart;
And comrades in war, they were rivals in love—
Thus Jealousy poison'd keen Enmity's dart.

3.

The earl took an oath, o'er his good battle-brand,
That never a rival should stand in his way;
He has sworn to wreak vengeance with bloodshedding hand,
Nor justice nor pity his anger can stay.

4.

His friendship has now doff'd her deep veiling mask,
For envy and hatred have carried the day;
Earl Walter has ta'en up his cuirass and casque,
His lance and his buckler, for battle array.

5.

The cavalier mounted his berry-brown steed,
And fierce at Count Godfrey his challenge he threw;
That lord made him dight for the battle with speed,
And boldly to fight the two combatants flew.

6.

When the thunder-clouds meet in the heaven's high vault,
The flashes of lightning their onset proclaim;
'Twas thus when the knights met in battle's assault,
That gleam'd from their falchions the sparkling flame.

7.

Long, long did they fight in the blood-bedew'd field,
And thickly as hail fell the bickering blows,
And neither knight deign'd to the other to yield,
For never in battle met bitterer foes.

8.

Count Godfrey, all senseless, is stretch'd in his gore,
And the chill damp like dew-drops has moisten'd his brow;
And long may his fair one her lover deplore,
And the suit of his rival may heighten her woe.

9.

His charger runs wild o'er the deep purple sward,
And proudly rejoices in gay liberty;
His hounds in the lone desert castle keep guard,
His falcons fly wild o'er the heath and the sea.

10.

His horse may obey a new master's command,
His hawk and his hounds for another may range,
But when two hearts are link'd, who shall sever the band,
Or shall bid a true maiden her constancy change?

11.

The sword may destroy, but allays not the pain;
Love's knot it may burst, not the anguish dispel;
And Earl Walter may seek the fair maiden to gain,
But he wins not the heart of the true Isabel.

12.

Ah ! little he thought that so constant a flame,
So faithfully kindled a maiden's pure breast !—
“ Forget thy lost Godfrey, nor think of his name ;
“ Let not sorrow deprive such a bosom of rest.”

13.

“ Bid the faithfulest dove, of her partner deprived,
“ Do ought but her loss to bewail and lament ;
“ In the truest dove's breast may a flame be revived,
“ But never my heart from my true love be bent.

14.

“ Bid the tree when uprooted his blossom to bear,
“ Will the branches e'er flourish in verdure and bloom ?
“ Why bid me again in delight to appear,
“ When the death of my Godfrey has sealed my doom ?”

15.

Earl Walter in wrath saw his offers disdain'd ;
His love is to vengeance and jealousy turn'd :
What prayers could not vanquish, by power is gain'd ;
What love cannot conquer, by force may be earn'd.

16.

“ Have I stoop’d for thy love, and thy favour to pray?

“ My love thou hast scorn’d—thou shalt yield to my hate.”

’Twas thus that he spoke, as in battle array,

Begirt by his vassals, he lit at the gate.

17.

Earl Walter was mighty in wealth and in power,

Her father though noble was feeble and old,

And misery hangs o’er his desolate tower

If Isabel longer her favour withhold.

18.

He sued not as lover—as tyrant and lord,

He demanded the hand of the trembling bride;

His anger is waked, and the lance or the sword,

Or the hand of the maiden the balance decide.

19.

The bridal approaches, while withers away

The bride, like a floweret crush’d in its bloom;

And the fairest of virgins shall sink to decay,

And the canker of anguish her bosom consume.

20.

The altar is dress'd for the festival show,
The chorus resounds through the lengthening aisle,
While deck'd in apparel that mocks at her woe,
Like a convict condemn'd to the funeral pile,

21.

Advanced to the altar the tremulous bride,
And silently knelt o'er the sacred step,
And Earl Walter in armour is kneeling beside,
With a scowl on his brow, and a curse on his lip.

22.

The bridegroom is ready, the priest is prepared,
The bride, like a victim, is silent and still,
When loud at the portal a courser is heard,
And the blast of a trumpet sounds wildly and shrill.

23.

Thrice rang through the arches the challenging peal,
Like a knell to the ear of Earl Walter it rang,
When appear'd at the gateway a warrior in steel,
And swift from his charger the cavalier sprang.

24.

Then the cheek of Earl Walter grew pallid with dread,
While fierce on the pavement his gauntlet he threw;
He deem'd that that lord for a year had been dead,
'Twas the form of a knight whom in battle he slew.

25.

“ Prepare thee for battle, I seek to repay
“ The recompense due on an impious head;
“ I am come to reclaim whom you sought to betray,
“ And to link as a bride to thy tyrannous bed.”

26.

Earl Walter had ne'er, in the red battle field,
Fear'd the call of the foeman who challenged to fight;
But he knew in that signal his death-warrant seal'd—
While he levell'd his lance, his hand shook with affright.

27.

Now they spur their fleet chargers to battle amain,
And onward they rush with their lances in rest;
Earl Walter has fallen, and outstretch'd on the plain,
The spear of his foeman is deep in his breast.

28.

Count Godfrey hath won—and may claim at his will
The hand which Earl Walter no longer denied ;
Earl Walter is dead—but a mightier still,
And more terrible rival has wedded his bride.

29.

That rapture of pleasure too hastily burst,
That impulse of joy was too sudden and strong,
The moment that saw all her sorrows dispersed
Has sever'd the blossom that wither'd so long.

30.

Though the dawn may dispel all the horrors of night,
And flowers revive that have droop'd in the snow,
Yet a heart may be broken by sudden delight,
And joy may extinguish the victim of woe.

THE GLOVE.

A TRANSLATION FROM SCHILLER.

THE GLOVE.

To view the Circus' game,
The monarch Francis came,
 In pride and princely state ;
While worth and beauty crown'd
The balconies around, 5
 Where lords and ladies sate.

He beckon'd with his hand,
The gates wide open stand,
And forth, with measured pace,
 A lion came, 10
And cast around that space
 His glance of flame ;

And, yawning wide and grim,
He shook his mane around,
Outstretch'd each giant limb, 15
And couch'd him on the ground.

Again the monarch beckon'd,
And straightway were the second
Barriers open flung ;
And forth, with frantic bound, 20
A tiger sprung.

That lion when he found,
 He raised a hideous yell;
 His tail in circles bending,
 And far his tongue extending,
 The tiger's fury tell:

While glowing fierce with rage,
Yet doubtful to engage,
He walk'd his foe around;
And grinning, growling, 30
Fiercely scowling,
He stretch'd him on the ground.

The king beckon'd again,
They ope another den ;
With angry course, in double force, 35
At once two leopards burst ;

At once they seized,
Enraged with bloody thirst,
The tiger beast.
In them he fix'd his ruthless claws. 40

With angry roar arose
The stately lion ;—'Tis a pause—
Around the circus going,
For blood and contest glowing,
Each watch their monster foes. 45

From off the balustrade
Was dropp'd by snowy hand,
Of fair and beauteous maid,
A glove upon the sand
Of that arena—in the midst— 50
The lion and his foe betwixt.

When thus with playful jest,
Young Cunigund address'd
The knight Delorges—"Is thy love,
"Sir Knight, so warm as oft you swore, 55
"In every hour to me before?
"If so it be—bring me yon glove."

The fearless knight then nimbly sought
The arena's space
With hasty pace, 60
Amidst that awful concourse caught
With active grasp the lady's glove,
And bore it to the fair above,
While knights and noble ladies gaze
With wonder, and with wild amaze, 65
And every lip resounds his praise.
Those amorous glances seem to bless
The knight with prosperous love's success,
For Cunigund's fair features wore

The expression of delight and love :— 70

Full in her face he flung the glove,

And turning for a moment stood—

“ Lady, I seek no gratitude !”

And left her then for evermore.

THE END.

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